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PRESS RELEASE

Honolulu City Council Chair Todd Apo and Council Floor Leader Ikaika Anderson today discussed a meeting held last Friday with Department of Transportation Director Brennon Morioka and Gov. Linda Lingle's Chief of Staff Barry Fukunaga regarding the Honolulu High Capacity Transit Corridor Project (HHCTCP).

At this meeting, Apo and Anderson requested they be invited to Gov. Lingle's upcoming meeting in Washington, D.C. with Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Administrator Peter Rogoff. The councilmembers were informed Monday that the governor denied their request.

"Our request for Gov. Lingle to include us in the meeting with Administrator Rogoff is to ensure that the State administration, the City Administration and the City Council are hearing the exact same information from the FTA," Apo said. "As the body responsible to vote on issuing the billions of dollars in bonds for mass transit, the City Council needs to be on the same page with the State and County administrations and the federal government, and our attendance at the meeting between the governor and the FTA served to further that objective."

Anderson added, "While in Washington last November, the FTA told me that they are concerned with diverting federal money earmarked for TheBus to pay for mass transit. But they did not say a project adjustment is necessary, that the City's financial plan is unable to support the project, or that exploring a partial at-grade system would cause a mere six-month delay. In fact, the FTA told me the project's financial plan was acceptable despite the downturn in the economy, and that any portion of the project being constructed at-grade causes a potential lengthy delay coupled with jeopardizing of federal funding. If the FTA has changed their minds in the past two months since I talked with them, then the City Council needs to hear that directly from them so that we are all receiving identical information firsthand."

The City administration and the State administration are obviously at odds on the project, and the Council is caught in the middle as each side interprets what they've heard from the FTA differently. Apo and Anderson said their objective is not to advocate for or against the project, nor to bash or support either administration. Both councilmembers, in an effort to reach the truth on behalf of the Council, agree they must personally hear firsthand the FTA's current position and any concerns the agency may have, and then share that firsthand information with the public and their fellow councilmembers.